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ABSTRACT

In children's literature not many characters are shown as multidimensional human beings with strengths as well as weaknesses. Instead, both males and females display behavior and traits which reflect stereotypical roles, responsibilities, and expectations. Although there may be segments of society which are redefining gender roles, the female and male characters children read about are often locked into traditional jobs and behaviors. Teachers must search for books which will initiate conversations and questions about gender roles and the perceptions of appropriate behavior and activities. Through these conversations and questions, teachers and other adults can be instrumental in helping the students reflect on gender expectations, reflection that can lead to appreciation and implementation of gender fairness and equality. This guide offers a booklist, ideas, and a list of teacher resources to provide a starting place for these discussions. The guide lists 96 picture storybooks, 138 novels, 40 informational books, 14 poetry books, and 6 selected teacher resources for a beginning bibliography. It also offers 10 ideas for building a more balanced language arts curriculum for the classroom. (NKA)

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NCTE

Positions and Guidelines

A Professional Association of Educators in English Studies, Literacy, and Language Arts

Guidelines for a Gender-Balanced Curriculum in English Language Arts Pre-K to Grade 6

Prepared by the Women in Literature and Life Assembly (WILLA) of NCTE

Gender equity does not exist in business, in academics, or athletics. One other place it does not exist is in children's literature. In part, the inequity in the literature is one of invisibility-fewer female than male protagonists are represented in books written for children. Additionally, few of those young female protagonists are strong enough of mind, body, or will to serve as positive role models for girls both in and out of our classrooms.

Another facet of the inequity in literature is that many characters are not shown as multi-dimensional human beings with strengths as well as weaknesses. Instead, both males and females display behavior and traits which reflect stereotypical roles, responsibilities, and expectations. Although there may be segments of our society which are redefining gender roles, the female and male characters children read about are often locked into traditional jobs and behaviors.

As teachers and adults who work with children, we advocate wide reading of good literature as one way for children to have vicarious experiences in which they can identify with strong characters across a wide range of human experiences which cross traditional gender boundaries. But . . . if children's books and the characters in them remain gender-bound, the ideas which might cause children to develop expectations for the future, responses to life's events, and stances on issues may also remain stereotypically gender-bound.

We must all search for books which will initiate conversations and questions about gender roles and the perceptions of appropriate behavior and activities. Through these conversations and questions, teachers and other caring adults can be instrumental in helping the students reflect on gender expectations, reflection that can lead to appreciation and implementation of gender fairness and equity. Although we need to share books which validate the present experiences of the readers' lives, we also need to challenge those experiences by showing options and alternatives. Doing this will enable readers to begin to challenge the inequities they find in their real worlds.

The booklist, the activities, and the list of teacher resources which follow provide a starting place for these discussions. We invite each of you to continue to find other resources and to share them with your students and your peers.

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A selected booklist for a gender-balanced curriculum in English language arts: Pre-K to Grade 6

(Titles which might serve as a model for student writing in "womanist" modes such as diary, letter, journal, are followed by a "W.")

Fiction: Picture storybooks

Alexander, Sally Hobart. *Maggie's Whopper*

Allinson, Beverly. *Effie*

Andrews, Jan. *The Very Last First Time*

Bedard, Michel. *Emily*

Blume, Judy. *The Pain and the Great One*

Bunting, Eve. *The Wednesday Surprise*

Brett, Jan. *Trouble with Trolls*

Browne, Anthony. *Piggybook*

Caines, Jeannette. *Just Us Women*

Coerr, Eleanor. *Sadako*
_____. *Josephia Story Quilt*

Cooney, Barbara. *Hattie and the Wild Waves*
_____. *Only Opal* (W)
_____. *Miss Rumphius*

de Paola, Tomie. *Fin M'Coul: The Giant of Knockmany Hill*
_____. *Oliver Button Is a Sissy*
_____. *Strega Nona's Magic Lessons* (and others in the series)
_____. *The Legend of Bluebonnet*

Dorros, Arthur. *Abuela*

Emberley, Michael. *Ruby*

Flournoy, Valerie. *The Patchwork Quilt*

Fox, Mem. *Hattie and the Fox*
_____. *Koala Lou*
_____. *Night Noises*
_____. *Possum Magic*
_____. *Shoes from Grandpa*
_____. *Time for Bed*
_____. *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge*

Gay, Marie-Louise. *Midnight Mimi*

Gilman, Phoebe. *Grandma and the Pirates*

Goble, Paul. *The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses*

Godden, Rumer. *The Story of Holly and Ivy*

Heyward, DuBose. *The Country Bunny and the Little Gold Shoes*

Henkes, Kevin. *Chester's Way*
_____. *Chrysanthemum*
_____. *Jessica*
_____. *Sheila Rae, the Brave*

Hoffman, Mary. *Amazing Grace*
_____. *Henry's Baby*

Hooks, William. *The Ballad of Belle Dorcas*

Hopkinson, Deborah. *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt*

Houston, Gloria. *My Great Aunt Arizona*

Howard, Elizabeth. *Aunt Flossie's Hats (and Crab Cakes Later)*

Huck, Charlotte. *Princess Furball*

Hughes, Shirley. *Up and Up*

Joosse, Barbara M. *Mama Do You Love Me?*

Jones, Rebecca. *Matthew and Tilly*

Keats, Ezra Jack. *Maggie and the Pirates*

Kellogg, Steven. *The Island of Skog*

Kesselman, Wendy. *Emma*

Khalsa, Dayal Kaur. *Cowboy Dreams*
_____. *I Want a Dog*
_____. *Tales of a Gambling Grandma*

LeGuin, Ursula. *A Ride on the Red Mare's Back*

Little, Jean. *Jess Was the Brave One*

McCully, Emily Arnold. *Mirette on the High Wire*

McKissack, Patricia. *Flossie and the Fox*

MacLachlan, Patricia. *Mama One, Mama Two*

Martin, Rafe. *The Rough-Face Girl*

Merrill, Jean. *The Girl Who Loved Caterpillars*

Morgan, Allen. *The Magic Hockey Skates*

Muller, Robin. *Mollie Whoopie and the Giant*
_____. *The Nightwood*
_____. *Tatterhood*

Munsch, Robert. *The Paper Bag Princess*

Nash, Ogden. *The Adventures of Isabel*

Polacco, Patricia. *The Keeping Quilt*
_____. *Pink and Say*
_____. *Baboushka's Doll*
_____. *Mrs. Kate and Tush*
_____. *Chicken Sunday*
_____. *Just Plain Fancy*
_____. *Thunder Cake*

Paterson, Katherine. *The King's Equal*

Pomerantz, Charlotte. *The Chalk Doll*

Rathman, Peggy. *Ruby the Copycat*

Reinggold, Faith. *Tar Beach*

Schroeder, Alan. *Ragtime Tumpie*

Sheldon, Dyan. *The Whales' Song*

Stanley, Diane. *Fortune*

Steig, William. *Brave Irene*

Stinson, Kathy. *Red Is Best*

Uchida, Yoshiko. *The Bracelet*

Waber, Ira. *Ira Sleeps Over*

Willard, Nancy. *The High Rise Glorious Skittle Skat Roarious Sky Pie Angel Food Cake*

Williams, Vera. *Music, Music for Everyone*
_____. *Something Special for Me*
_____. *A Chair for My Mother*

Wood, Audrey. *Heckedy Peg*

Yee, Paul. *Roses Sing on New Snow: A Delicious Tale*

Yolen, Jane. *The Emperor and the Kite*
_____. *Owl Moon*
_____. *The Ballad of the Pirate Queens*
_____. *Sleeping Ugly*

Young, Ed. *Seven Blind Mice*

Zolotow, Charlotte. *This Quiet Lady*

_____. *William's Doll*

Fiction: Novels

Alexander, Lloyd. *Philadelphia Adventure*
_____. *Westmark* (and sequels: The Kestrel, The Beggar Queen)

Avi. *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*
_____. *Bright Shadow*
_____. *Blue Heron*

Babbitt, Natalie. *Tuck Everlasting*

Banks, Lynne Reid. *The Farthest Away Mountain*

Barron, T. A. *Heartlight*
_____. *The Ancient One*
_____. *The Merlin Effect*

Blos, Joan. *A Gathering of Days: A New England Girl's Journal 1830-1832* (W)

Brink, Carol Ryrie. *Caddie Woodlawn*

Brooke, William. *Telling of the Tales*

Bruchac, Joseph, and Gayle Ross. *The Girl Who Married the Moon*

Buffie, Margaret. *Who Is Frances Rain?*

Burnett, Frances Hodgson. *The Secret Garden*

Byars, Betsy. *The Glory Girl*

Campbell, Ann. *Once Upon a Princess and a Pea*

Cassedy, Sylvia. *Behind the Attic Wall*

Choi, Sook Nyul. *Year of Impossible Goodbyes*

Clapp, Patricia. *Witches' Children*

Cleary, Beverly. *Ramona the Brave* (and sequels)
_____. *Strider*

Coerr, Eleanor. *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*

Cushman, Karen. *Catherine, Called Birdy*

Dahl, Roald. *Matilda*
_____. *The BFG*

Ellis, Sarah. *Pick Up Sticks*
_____. *The Baby Project*

Estes, Eleanor. *The Hundred Dresses*

Field, Rachel. *Calico Bush*

Fitzhugh, Louise. *Harriet the Spy* (W)

George, Jean Craighead. *Dear Rebecca, Winter Is Here* (W)
_____. *Julie of the Wolves*

Garrigue, Sheila. *The Eternal Spring of Mr. Ito*

Guy, Rosa. *The Friends*

Hahn, Mary Downing. *Stepping on the Cracks*
_____. *Daphne's Book*

Hamilton, Virginia. *Cousins*
_____. *Plain City*

Hautzig, Esther. *The Endless Steppe: Growing Up in Siberia*

Heide, Florence Parry. *Growing Anyway Up*

Hesse, Karen. *Letters from Rifka* (W)

Houston, Jeanne Wakatsuki, and James D. Houston. *Farewell to Manzinar*

Hudson, Jan. *Sweetgrass*

Hughes, Monica. *The Isis Trilogy*
_____. *The Tomorrow City*

Hurmence, Belinda. *A Girl Called Boy*

Innocenti, Robert. *Rose Blanche*

Johnson, Angela. *Tell Me a Story, Mama*
_____. *Toning the Sweep*

Johnston, Julie. *Adam and Eve and Pinch Me* (W)
_____. *Hero of Lesser Causes*

Harris, Dorothy Joan. *Don't Call Me Sugarbaby*

Kendall, Carol. *The Gammage Cup*

Kherdian, David. *The Road from Home*

Kinsey-Warnock, Natalie. *The Canada Geese Quilt*

Konigsburg, E. L. *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*

Laird, Elizabeth. *Kiss the Dust*

L'Engle, Madeleine. *A Wrinkle in Time* (and others)

Lisle, Janet Taylor. *Afternoon of the Elves*

Lowry, Lois. *Number the Stars*
_____. *Anastasia Krupnik* (and sequels)

Lunn, Janet. *Shadow in Hawthorn Bay*
_____. *The Root Cellar*

Lyon, George Ella. *Borrowed Children*

Lyons, Mary E. *Letters from a Slave Girl: The Story of Harriet Jacobs* (W)

McKinley, Robin. *Beauty*
_____. *The Blue Sword*
_____. *Deerskin*
_____. *The Hero and the Crown*

McCaughrean, Geraldine. *One Thousand and One Arabian Nights*

MacLachlan, Patricia. *Sarah, Plain and Tall*
_____. *Cassie Binegar*
_____. *Unclaimed Treasures*

Mahy, Margaret. *The Changeover*

Marsden, John. *So Much to Tell You* (W)

Matas, Carol. *The Burning Time*
_____. *Lisa* (in U.S.: *Lisa's War*)

Miles, Betty. *The Real Me*
_____. *Maudie, Me & The Dirty Book*

Mills, Lauren. *The Rag Coat*

Mohr, Nicholasa. *Felita*
_____. *Going Home?*

Montgomery, L. M. *Anne of Green Gables*

Mori, Kyoko. *Shizuko's Daughter*

Morris, Judy K. *The Kid Who Ran for Principal*

Naidoo, Beverley. *Journey to Jo'burg*
_____. *Chain of Fire*

O'Brien, Robert. *Z for Zachariah*

O'Dell, Scott. *Black Star, Bright Dawn*
_____. *Island of the Blue Dolphin*
_____. *Sing Down the Moon*

O'Neal, Zibby. *The Language of Goldfish*

Orlev, Uri. *Lydia, Queen of Palestine*

Paterson, Katherine. *Flip-Flop Girl*
_____. *The Great Gilly Hopkins*

_____. *Jacob Have I Loved*
_____. *Lyddie*

Paulsen, Gary. *Nightjohn*

Pearson, Kit. *The Sky Is Falling*

Pfeffer, Susan Beth. *Kid Power*

Pullman, Philip. *The Ruby in the Smoke*

Rappaport, Doreen. *Trouble in the Mines*

Reiss, Johanna. *The Upstairs Room*

Rinaldi, Ann. *In My Father's House*
_____. *The Last Silk Dress*
_____. *A Break with Charity*
_____. *The Fifth of March*

Roberts, Willo Davis. *The Girl with the Silver Eyes*

Rocklin, Joanne. *Dear Baby* (W)

Rylant, Cynthia. *Missing May*

Schlee, Ann. *Ask Me No Questions*

Sebestyn, Ouida. *Words by Heart*

Siegel, Aranka. *Upon the Head of the Goat*

Smucker, Barbara. *Underground to Canada*

Snyder, Zilpha Keatley. *Libby on Wednesday*

Speare, Elizabeth. *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*

Spinelli, Jerry. *There's a Girl in My Hammerlock*

Staples, Suzanne Fisher. *Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind*
_____. *Haveli*

Takashima, S. *A Child in Prison Camp*

Taylor, Cora. *Yesterday's Doll* (first published as *The Doll*)
_____. *Julie*

Taylor, Mildred, *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* (and sequels)

Taylor, Theodore. *The Trouble with Tuck*

Thomas, Marlo, et al. *Free to Be, You and Me*

Toll, Nelly. *Behind the Secret Window: A Memoir of a Hidden Childhood During World War Two* (W)

Turner, Anne. *Nettie's Trip South* (W)

Uchida, Yoshiko. *Journey to Topaz: The Story of the Japanese-American Evacuation*

Voigt, Cynthia. *Dicey's Song*
_____. *Homecoming*
_____. *The Callender Papers*

Vos, Ida. *Hide and Seek*

Walsh, Jill Paton. *A Parcel of Patterns*

Webster, Jean. *Daddy Long Legs* (W)
_____. *Dear Enemy* (W)

White, E. B. *Charlotte's Web*

Yolen, Jane. *The Devil's Arithmetic*

Informational Books

Ayer, Eleanor H. *Margaret Bourke-White: Photographing the World*

Bisel, Sara C. *The Secrets of Vesuvius*

Bondar, Roberta. *On the Shuttle: Eight Days in Space*

Brooks, Polly Shyer. *Queen Eleanor, Independent Spirit of the Medieval World: A Biography of Eleanor of Aquitaine*

Chang, Ina. *A Separate Battle: Women and the Civil War*

Cummings, Pat. *Talking with Artists* (biographies of children's book illustrators)

Edeen, Susan, and John Edeen. *Women Mathematicians*

Felton, Harry. *Deborah Sampson: Soldier of the Revolution*

Frank, Anne. *The Diary of a Young Girl*

Freedman, Russell. *Children of the Wild West*
_____. *Eleanor Roosevelt: A Life of Discovery*

Fritz, Jean. *Homesick: My Own Story*

Gardner, Jeanne Lemonnier. *Mary Jemison, Indian Captive*

Hyman, Trina Schart. *Self-Portrait: Trina Schart Hyman*

Igus, Toyomi, ed. *Great Women in the Struggle* (Series: Book of Black Heroes)

Jackson, Guida. *Women Who Ruled*

Jakes, John. *Susanna of the Alamo: A True Story*

Konigsburg, E. L. *A Proud Taste for Scarlet and Miniver* (on Eleanor of Aquitaine)

Krensky, Stephen. *Four against the Odds*

Lanker, Brian. *I Dream a World: Portraits of Black Women Who Changed America*

Little, Jean. *Little by Little: A Writer's Education*

Lyons, Mary E. *Sorrow's Kitchen: The Life and Folklore of Zora Neale Hurston*

McGovern, Ann. *The Secret Soldier: The Story of Deborah Sampson*

McKissack, Patricia and Frederick McKissack. *Sojourner Truth: Ain't I a Woman?*

Margolies, Barbara A. *Rehma's Journey*

Mills, Jane. *Womanwords: A Dictionary of Words about Women*

Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds. *How I Came to Be a Writer*

Rappaport, Doreen. *American Women: Their Lives in Words*

Reimer, Luetta, and Wilbert Reimer. *Mathematicians Are People Too*

Rolka, Gail Meyer. *100 Women Who Shaped History*

Rowland, Della. *Sacajawea, Guide to Lewis and Clark*

Seager, Joni, and Ann Olson. *Women in the World: An International Atlas*

Shiels, Barbara. *Winners: Women and the Nobel Prize*

Stanley, Diane. *Cleopatra*

Stanley, Diane, and Peter Vennema. *Good Queen Bess: The Story of Elizabeth I of England*

Stanley, Fay. *The Last Princess: The Story of Princess Ka'iulani of Hawai'i*

Stevens, Bryna. *Frank Thompson: Her Civil War Story*

Uchida, Yoshiko. *The Invisible Thread: A Memoir*

Veglahn, Nancy. *Women Scientists*

Webb, Michael. *Marie Curie: Discoverer of Radium*

Poetry

Adoff, Arnold. *In for Winter, Out for Spring*

Carlstrom, Nancy White. *Wild Wild Sunflower Child Anna*

de Regniers, Beatrice Schenk. *A Week in the Life of Best Friends and Other Poems*

of Friendship

Giovanni, Nikki. *Spin a Soft Black Song*

Greenfield, Eloise. *Honey I Love, and Other Poems*

Hoberman, Mary Ann. *Fathers, Mothers, Sisters, Brothers*

Joe, Rita. *Song of Eskasoni: More Poems of Rita Joe*

Johnson, E. Pauline. *Flint and Feather: The Complete Poems of E. Pauline Johnson*

Kuskin, Karla. *The Rose on the Cake*

Livingston, Myra Cohn. *I Never Told and Other Poems*

Martz, Sandra, ed. *When I Am an Old Woman I Shall Wear Purple*

Thomas, Joyce Carol. *Brown Honey in Broomwheat Tea*

Turner, Anne. *Grass Songs: Poems of Women's Journey West*

Viorst, Judith. *If I Were in Charge of the World, and Other Worries*

Selected teacher resources: a beginning bibliography

(Books and journals which address the issue of gendered literature)

Fox, Mem. "Men Who Weep, Boys Who Dance: The Gender Agenda between the Lines of Children's Literature" *Language Arts* 70 (1993): 84-88.

McCracken, Nancy, and Bruce Appleby, eds. *Gender Issues in the Teaching of English*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton Cook, 1992.

Rehard, Karen. "Girl Power" *Book Links* (July 1993): 53-56.

Sadker, Myra, and David Sadker. *Failing at Fairness: How America's Schools Cheat Girls*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1994.

Streitmatter, Janice. *Toward Gender Equity in the Classroom*. New York: SUNY, 1994.

Temple, Charles. "'What if Beauty Had Been Ugly?' Reading against the Grain of Gender Bias in Children's Books." *Language Arts* 70 (1993): 89-93.

Ideas for building a more balanced language arts curriculum for your classroom

1. Weave books about, for, and by women/girls into every aspect of the curriculum.

2. Take a global view of language by valuing the stories and writing of people of all cultural groups and walks of life.

3. Privilege the more feminine styles/forms of writing by asking students to read and write in many formats, including diaries, journals, and dramas.

4. Include nonprint media which present girls/women/men in positive and non-stereotypical roles in the curriculum. Especially important here is selection of materials that show people involved in work-related scenarios which are inclusive, rather than exclusive, in demonstrating that both men and women are able to select any profession for their life's work. If old materials which tend to depict people in gender stereotyped career roles (i. e., male truck drivers and female secretaries, male astronauts and female homemakers) are the only materials available to suit your content objectives, be certain to comment on these depictions to your class and ask them to tell how these are narrow interpretations of career roles.

5. Seek out stories, books, and other materials which show girls and women as active participants in life, not passive observers and recipients of the actions and decisions of others. Let readers see that both boys and girls can instigate action, make choices, take the lead; to succeed, both girls and boys must see that passive strategies such as hoping and waiting allow others to make choices for us.

6. Seek out stories, picture books, and other materials which portray girls as able to succeed in any endeavor.

7. Pair books with similar themes or topics to include both a male and a female protagonist. For example when reading a survival story with a male character such as *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen, also read a survival book with a female character such as *Island of the Blue Dolphins* or *Black Star, Bright Dawn,* both by Scott O'Dell.

8. Seek out stories, picture books, and other materials which show adults interacting with child characters in roles other than those stereotypically female or male. Dad may make the lunch while Mom fixes the car; a favorite teacher may be a male, while a favorite doctor may be a female.

9. Select literature purposefully so readers identify enough with the characters to understand that the admirable qualities possessed by both male and female characters are qualities they may wish to emulate in their lives. For example, either a boy or girl may wish to be as determined as Grace in the picture storybook *Amazing Grace* by Mary Hoffman, or as caring of her dogs as the girl Iditarod competitor in *Black Star, Bright Dawn* by Scott O'Dell.

10. When teaching classical or traditional works, provide opportunities for discussion of the female characters' point of view.

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